

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2331

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 3201

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OTRA, OEXC, XJ

SUBJ: SMITHSONIAN AFRICAN DIASPORA PROGRAM

REF: STATE 100968-U

1. EMBASSY'S BASIC JUDGMENT IS IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO APPROACH LOCAL AMERICAN BUSINESS FIRMS HERE TO RESCUE PROJECT WHICH SMITHSONIAN HAD ALREADY UNDERTAKEN TO PROVIDE SUPPORT. FOR SMITHSONIAN TO APPROACH THE HEAD U.S. OFFICES OF THE SAME FIRMS MIGHT IN PRINCIPLE BE QUITE ANOTHER MATTER.

2. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SPECIAL FACTORS ON THE ACCRA SCENE WHICH MAKE IT PREFERABLE IN OUR VIEW NOT TO PURSUE THAT AVENUE EITHER. THEY ARE:

(A) RECEIPT OF REFTEL WAS PRECEDED BY ONE DAY BY ORAL WORD FROM MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE THAT APPROVAL HAD BEEN GRANTED TO ACCEPT SMITHSONIAN INVITATION. AS INITIAL DEADLINE FOR THIS PHASE OF OPERATION HAD BEEN SET AT DECEMBER 1, 1975, THIS MEANS GHANA'S REPLY IS ALMOST EXACTLY FIVE MONTHS LATE, DESPITE NUMEROUS URGINGS BY EMBASSY AT ALL LEVELS INCLUDING AMBASSADOR'S DIRECT APPEAL TO COMMISSIONER. WE STILL HAVE NOT RECEIVED INFORMATION ON NAMES, EQUIPMENT, ETC. WHICH SHOULD HAVE COME WITH REPLY.

(B) IN AFTERMATH OF GHANA'S ABRUPT CANCELLATION OF SECRETARY'S VISIT, EMBASSY DOES NOT FEEL IT SHOULD AT THIS TIME APPEAR TO PUSH PROJECTS OF THIS KIND, MUCH LESS MAKE SPECIAL EFFORT TO RESCUE PROGRAMS WHICH GHANAIAN DELAYS HAVE JEOPARDIZED.

(C) THERE IS ANOTHER PENDING PROJECT FOR WHICH WE DO PLAN TO
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SOLICIT LOCAL AMERICAN BUSINESS SUPPORT WHICH WE BELIEVE

IS CLOSER TO THEIR INTERESTS AND OURS AND MORE APPROPRIATE UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. EMBASSY WOULD NOT LIKE TO JEOPARDIZE THAT SUPPORT WITH EFFORT TO PROP UP SMITHSONIAN PROJECT. THIS PROJECT IS A FUND, ALREADY STARTED UNDER AUSPICES OF GHANA ASSOCIATION OF ALUMNI OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES, TO PROVIDE TRAVEL TO U.S. FOR GHANAIAN STUDENTS FOR WHOM THIS WOULD MAKE POSSIBLE ACCEPTANCE OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS.

3. IT IS THEREFORE EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATION, IN SPECIAL CASE OF GHANA, THAT SMITHSONIAN BE ADVISED TO INFORM GOG THAT IN VIEW OF LATENESS OF THEIR REPLY IT WILL NO LONGER BE POSSIBLE TO INCLUDE GHANAIAN TROUP IN PLANS FOR THIS SUMMER'S FOLK FESTIVAL PROGRAM.

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